

Neighborhood Youth Corps Makes

J. H. Parks

Markle's Mill Into a Park

Community Affairs File

One of the many projects of the Neighborhood Youth Corps this summer is converting the old Markle's Mill, or Mill Creek Dam, area into a park. Hulman & Co., owners of the land, have leased the area five miles northeast of Terre Haute to Otter Creek Township.

Although the mill is no longer standing, it was at one time a famous historic landmark. Built in 1816 by Major Abraham Markle, the mill had the distinction of being the oldest one west of the Alleghenies.

In the early 1800s the mill was a rest spot for travelers. After Markle died his son Fred took over operation of the mill and remodeled the building. Then, during the pre-Civil War days, it is rumored, the mill was a hiding place for runaway slaves, and it is said that the building had hidden chambers and passages. At that time it was a useful link in the Underground Railroad.

In 1923 the mill ceased operation but it was still visited by "hundreds of tourists monthly." Then, on Sept. 20, 1938, the building itself burned so that nothing was left but the foundation.

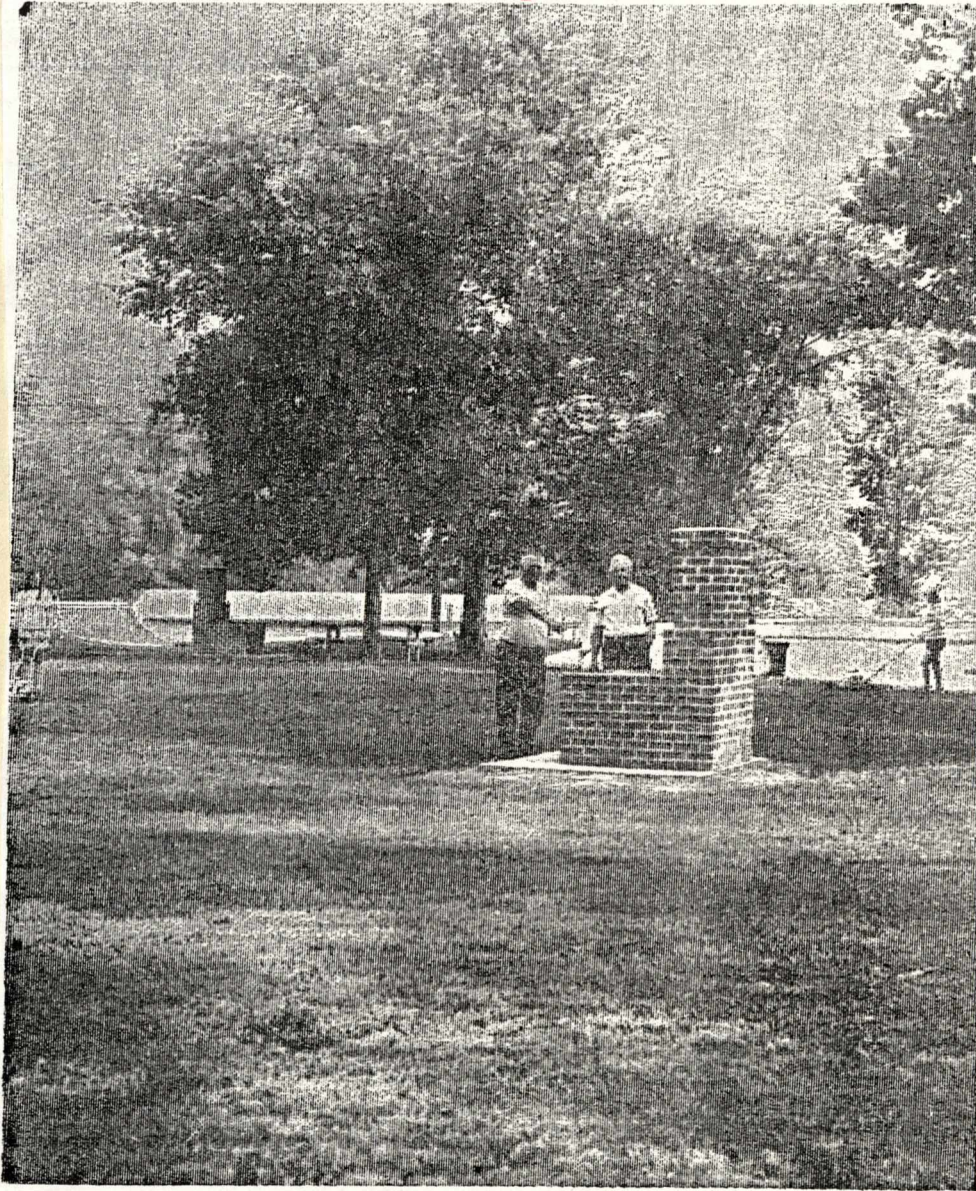
Now a statement made by an unknown historian in 1923 is coming true; "The old mill,

the Markle homestead and much of the lands adjoining should become a public park . . ."

The youth corps is clearing out the underbrush that has grown up over the years, landscaping the area and making it suitable for picnicking by cutting weeds and trees, whitewashing the concrete part of the dam that remains and painting picnic tables.

This is not the only park the NYC participants are working on. Gerald Stitt, their director, said they are also clearing and repairing Fowler Park, Fairbanks Park, Deming Park and Collett Park. And they are employed in many other jobs. For instance, Jim Rupska is doing mechanical work at Hulman Field and a girl is hostess for the Terre Haute Housing Authority.

Around 340 youth have been given employment by the Neighborhood Youth Corps in Terre Haute this summer. The jobs are all connected with city government or are non-profit organizations, and the youth receive \$1.45 an hour. If attending school they work a 26-hour week and if they're not going to school they work about 28 hours. Ages of participants are 14 and up if they're in school and 16 to 18 if out.



NEARING COMPLETION AS A PARK is this section of land near the old Markle's Mill and dam. Neighborhood Youth Corps workers Robin Lawhorn (far left) and Barbara Meneely (far right) mow the grounds while Harold O. Lloyd, park superintendent for North Terre Haute, and Carl O. Howard, Otter Creek Township Trustee, check one of the outdoor barbecues.

Strausburg Photo.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CORPS participants working at Markle's Mill, or Mill Creek Dam, set to work on an area that is only partly cleared. The eight youth who are converting the mill area into a park are (from left): Chuck Swift, Brent Phillips, Kathleen Lloyd, Bob Swift, Linda Meneely, Robin Lawhorn, Barbara Meneely and Richard Rogers. Strausburg Photo.

Mill Site Becomes Park

T.H. Parks Recreation
Also filed under Markle Family



TOWNSHIP PARK SITE—Some clearing of brush has been completed at the site of Markle's Mill in Otter Creek Township preparatory to developing it into a township-maintained public park. The property, owned by Hulman & Co., is being leased to the township with provision that it be maintained as a park.

Markle Mill

T.H. State 4/18/67
Property
Vigo Co. Recreation
Improved

By JOE WAGNER
Star Staff Writer

Under current plans approximately four acres of ground at the site of Markle's Mill on Otter Creek north of the city will become an Otter Creek Township-maintained park by next summer.

The property, bounded on the north by Otter Creek, on the east by the New York Central Railroad and on the west by what is referred to as the Mill Dam Road, is owned by Hulman & Co. Under a year-to-year lease agreement between the company and the township, the park is to be developed. It will be open to the general public.

Anton Hulman Jr., Friday said company attorneys and the township attorney currently are working out details of the lease.

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Carl Howard, Otter Creek Township trustee, who has been

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BY THE OLD MILL STREAM—Foundations shown are the remains of Markle's Mill located on Otter Creek at the east edge of North Terre Haute. Under current plans, about four acres of ground south of the creek will be developed as a township park by next summer. (Photos by Kadel)

Parks

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working for several months toward plans for developing the area, said plans at the present call for clearing brush, part of which has already been done, and setting up picnic tables and possibly ovens by next spring.

Limestone foundations of the mill, the oldest in operation west of the Alleghenies at the time it burned in the 1930's, are located on the south bank of the creek. The dam stretches across the creek and spillways are visible at the site.

According to Miss Juliet Peddie, local architect and artist, the mill was built by Abraham Markle who came out to Indiana with his family in 1816 and took up rather large tracts of land in this vicinity. He selected the most desirable site he could find for a mill which

he constructed here and built his home across the road.

Mr. Markle employed Ezra Jones to build the mill which was started in 1816 but not in use until 1817. This was the first mill in the vicinity and was very important to the first settlers here not only because it made it possible to convert their grain into flour for their own use, but because their surplus grain could be better shipped in the form. Whiskey also was made here at this time. He also used some of his power for a saw mill.

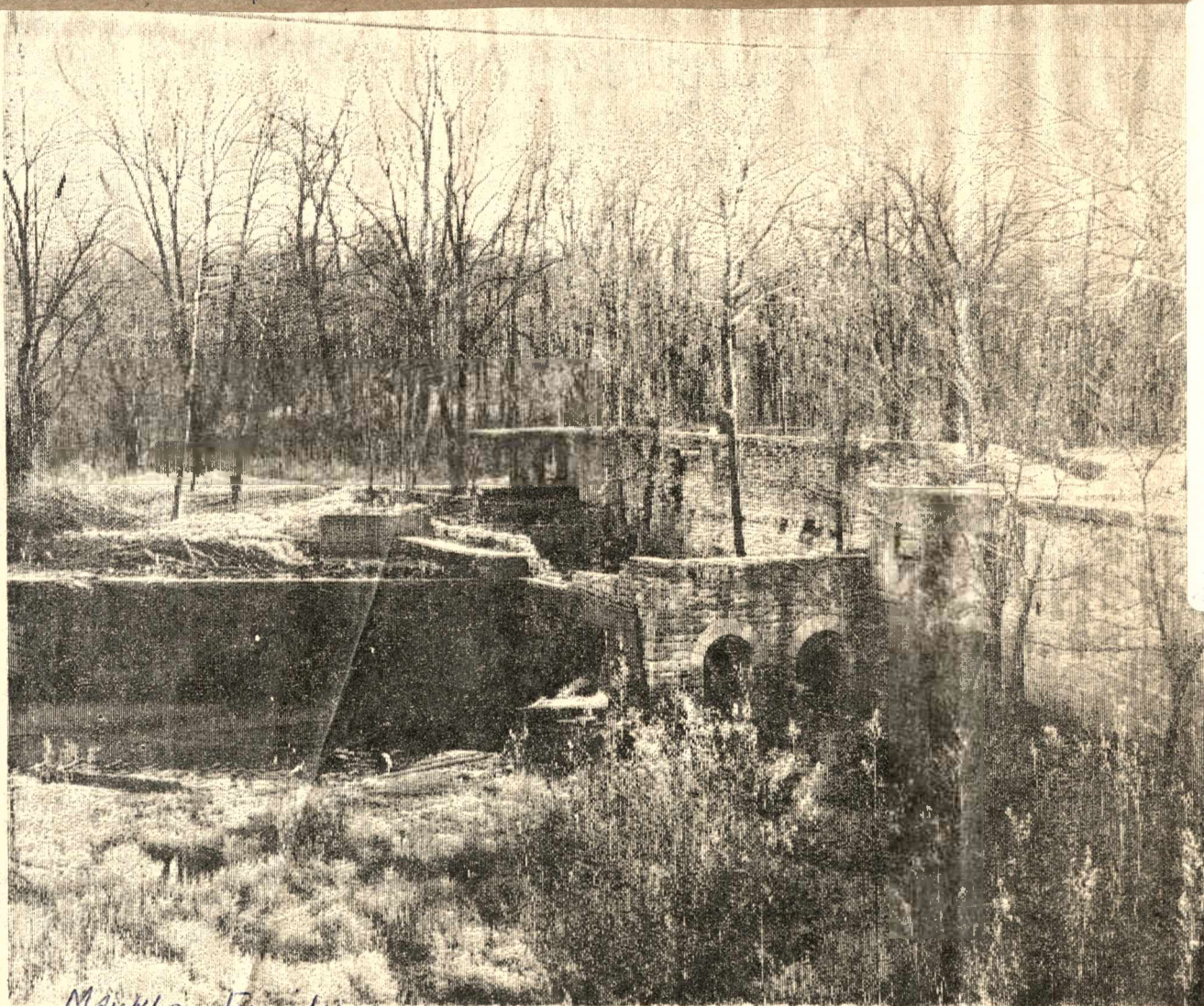
Abraham's sons Henry, and later Fred, followed him at the mill. Fred's son, W. D. Markle, followed his father and some years ago sold it to a Mr. Creal of Burnett. His widow sold it to a man named Welch who in turn sold it to C. D. Hansel. Mr. Hansel had a lease on the building and had been operating the mill for a

number of years before he purchased it. Reference is made to additional construction work on the building in 1866 by Fred Markle, but not to details as to just what was done at that time. No information is available of other physical changes until 1938 when it burned, not only destroying the mill itself but an interesting collection of historical material which had been collected by Mr. Hansel.

Most of the other early buildings which are no longer in existence today have been torn down or moved either because they no longer fulfilled their original purpose, or because business was encroaching on an area which had been residential in character or that they were not built well enough to last and were no longer fit for use.

The mill, however, was still doing a good business as a

mill, was not in the way of any town development, and was sturdy enough to continue to function with normal care, and might have continued for years to operate as a mill if a disastrous fire had not completely gutted it and taken away an early landmark which was both interesting and useful.



Markle Family

SITE OF OTTER CREEK PARK—The ground surrounding ruins of the historic old Markle's Mill on Otter Creek will be made into a picnic area and park. The land, located north-

east of North Terre Haute, will be leased to Otter Creek Township by its owner, Hulman and Company. The mill was burned some years ago. Photo by Chuck Strausburg.

New Park Area Planned At Historic Markle Mill

By MARY ANNE PIERCE
Tribune Staff Writer

Land adjacent to a historic Vigo County landmark will be turned into a small park and picnic grounds.

Otter Creek Township Trustee Carl Howard and his advisory board have plans to utilize nearly four acres of ground that lie on the site of the old Markle's Mill on Otter Creek.

The township was granted permission to turn the area into a small park by the land owners, Hulman and Company. Anton Hulman Jr. said attorneys for Hulman Co. and the town-

ship are ironing out final details of the lease.

Township officials report clearing operations will begin in the near future and the land will be maintained in an attractive manner. Cost of operation will be kept at a minimum during the clean-up with the use of Job Corps labor.

The mill was said to be the "oldest mill west of the Alleghenies" before it was destroyed several years ago.

During the early 1800's, the mill served as a haven for weary travelers. It stood by the Otter Creek dam and was

opened in 1817.

Pre-Civil War days brought rumors that the mill was used as a hiding place for runaway slaves and there was much talk that the building contained hidden chambers and passages.

The mill was plagued by small fires from time to time and several years ago, a fire swept through the building that left only the foundation remaining.

Trustee Howard predicted the park facilities, when completed, will be used by many residents of the county.

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INDIANA ROOM

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